

THE VOICE AND VISION for The Virginia Association for Pupil Transportation

SEPTEMBER 2004 EDITION
Bill Carr, Editor (Virginia Beach)

A Message from our President



VELERA GAMMONS

I know all of you have worked diligently to be prepared for the opening day of school and I sincerely hope everyone had a successful opening and will have an especially good school year! During this time of year when school bus drivers are being welcomed back by Transportation Staffs and school administrators I would like to welcome you; our new members, board members, regional directors, and committee chairpersons and other VAPT members who so graciously serve the Virginia Association for Pupil Transportation (VAPT).

I sincerely appreciate the opportunity to serve you as President of VAPT. Regardless of the size of a school division, be it city or county, densely or sparsely populated, it takes the knowledge and experience of us all to maintain a high standard of safety for our school bus service in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

The past June 2004 VAPT/DOE Annual Pupil Transportation Conference was a success due to the hard work of the VAPT Board, committee chairpersons and members, the VAPT membership and the valued input from our past president, Barbara Goodman. Appreciation also goes to the vendors on behalf of VAPT for their continued support at these conferences. Savings bonds and scholarships to deserving young people were made possible because of their contributions. Their presence is always a welcomed highlight at the conferences. Much information and knowledge was shared during that time and hopefully will help all of us do a better job in providing an excellent safe and efficient pupil transportation program. The exposure to new technology

and the ability to look at new products and talk with vendor representative's enable us keep up with changes as school buses and other components continue to develop throughout the transportation industry.

[VAPT Scholarship Winners presented by David Pace](#)

Joseph Ryan Yost – Giles County

Anthony Londell Sanford, Jr. – Franklin City

* Kyle Gregory Rodgers – Fairfax Co.

* Kyle has been named the first ever recipient of the Public Pupil Transportation Scholarship at Virginia Tech. This new scholarship is made available through an endowment funded by Mr. Sonny Merryman of Rustburg, Virginia and his Campbell County based bus and trailer dealership – Sonny Merryman, Inc – Virginia's Bus Company. Sonny Merryman, Inc. is the statewide school bus dealer for Thomas Built Buses.

[Hall of Fame Recipients presented by Fred Valentine](#)

- Robert A. Devers
1983 VAPT President
Bob was Supervisor of Transportation for Loudon County Schools before retiring and served on the VAPT Board of Directors in 1978 and 1979, Treasurer in 1980, Secretary in 1981, President-elect and Chairman of the Membership Committee in 1982, and served on the Nominating Committee in 1991 and 1992.
- Nathan H. Young, (deceased)
He was the first VAPT President – 1977.
Nathan was Director of Transportation for Henrico County Public Schools prior to retirement. He served as Chairman of the Legislative Committee in 1979, 1980, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990, and 1991.

Poster Contest **Winners** presented by Margaret Rayner

<u>Division 1</u>	(Kindergarten – 2nd grades)			
	1 st Place:	Petersburg	Shianna Gordon	2 nd grade
	2 nd Place:	Tappahannock	Miranda Hall	1 st grade
	3 rd Place:	Petersburg	Catera Light	1 st grade
<u>Division 2</u>	(3 rd grade – 5 th grades)			
	1 st Place:	Petersburg	Deon Turner	4 th grade
	2 nd Place:	King William Co.	Jennifer Bean	4 th grade
	3 rd Place:	Tappahannock	Preston Hedgeman	4 th grade
<u>Division 3</u>	(6 th – 8 th grades)			
	1 st Place:	Farmville	Lucinda Watson	7 th grade
	2 nd Place:	Farmville	Tara Cannon	8 th grade
	3 rd Place:	Farmville	Jessika James	8 th grade
<u>Division 4</u>				
	1 st Place	Surry Co.	Shameka Hardy	
	2 nd Place	Surry Co.	Stoney Wilkins	
	3 rd Place	Surry Co.	David Ellis	

School Bus Road-e-o **Winners** presented by Sharon Utley

Conventional Category

First Place: Montgomery Co. ----- Russell Altizer
Second Place: Roanoke Co. ----- Greg Lampert
Third Place: Clarke Co. ----- Candy Murphy

Transit Category

First Place: Montgomery Co. ----- Josha Simpkins
Second Place: Williamsburg-James City Co. -- Leslie Brady
Third Place: Buena Vista ----- Keneth Arthors

News from NASDPTS...

(National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services)

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has issued its annual update of safety recalls involving school buses and items of school bus equipment.

The report covers recalls during the period of January 1998 through June 2004.

The report can be viewed and downloaded from:

<http://nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/buses/schoolbusrecalls.htm>

NASDPTS also has informed us of the School Bus Information Council's (SBIC) involvement to field teams in a "Plane Pull" at Dulles Airport, just outside of Washington, D.C. There is an article in this edition of the newsletter covering the Plane Pull.

Potpourri -

Did you know the *Good Morning America* anchor, Robin Roberts, drove a school bus during her senior year of high school in Mississippi?

SHARING A RECIPE

Fried Chicken throughout the South: There are minor variations to the recipe, but you can't go wrong with this simple classic recipe found in South Carolina.

2 ½ - 3 lb. Broiler-fryer chickens, cut up, 2 cups all-purpose flour, 2 cups buttermilk, cooking oil.

Season the chicken with salt and pepper. Coat with some of the flour, then dip into buttermilk; coat again with remaining flour.

Pour oil into a deep skillet and heat to 350 degrees F. Regulate heat so chicken fries at 325 degrees F (if you have an electric skillet, otherwise, take this hint from the pioneer cooks: To test oil to see if it is hot enough to fry, sprinkle a small pinch of flour in oil. If oil does not sizzle, let it heat longer.)

Fry a few pieces at a time in hot oil until tender – 12 to 15 minutes. Turn once. Drain well. Serve hot or chilled. This recipe makes 8 servings.

Speaking of food, below is a picture of folks enjoying lunch provided at the conference by VAPT.

FYI

Virginia Beach City Public Schools Pupil Transportation Department has a different telephone and Fax number as shown below:

Operations

Phone: (757) 263-1545

Fax: (757) 263-1562

Administration

Phone: (757) 263-1569

Fax: (757) 263-1572

NEWS from the School Bus Information Council (SBIC)...

SBIC has been presented with a tremendous opportunity to promote the school bus industry.

For the past 11 years, the Special Olympic of Virginia has sponsored a Family Day at Dulles International Airport, outside of Washington, D.C. The event draws tens of thousands of families and attracts tremendous media coverage for two main reasons: (1) the day's activities raise money for students with special needs (last year alone, the total was over \$100,000!); and (2) the event serves as the unofficial world championship of plane pulling.

More than 60 teams of 20 people each actually compete to see who can pull a 150,000 pound Boeing 727 aircraft a mere 144 inches in the least amount of time on **September 18th**.

So, what does this mean to our industry?

First, the organizers of this event have invited us to display up to four school buses at the Family Day events and distribute promotional materials about school buses and pupil transportation. Also, included is a 10' x 10' tented area for other literature or displays. This will be a very unique opportunity to provide parents and children with information about the importance and quality of school bus transportation. Plus, the media will undoubtedly be interested in the display, information and demonstrations.

Second, information about the SBIC and our display of the latest school bus technologies will be included on the event's website – www.planepull.com.

Finally, the SBIC has been asked to field a 20-person team to compete in the Plane Pull. Naturally, we are looking for people that are "disproportionately strong" for their size. We also want people who are very competitive (we do not just want to "compete" in the Plane Pull – we want to have the fastest time and perhaps even a little crazy in a good way!) Finally, and most importantly, we are looking for people who have a keen desire to do something special for special children.

If you are or know someone who meets these criteria, here's how you can help.

First, if you have someone in your school district or company that fits the above criteria and would like to be part of the SBIC plane pulling team please contact SBIC. We need people from all across America who are willing to be warriors on the rope line.

Second, if someone from your school district or company is selected for the SBIC team, we would ask you to find sponsors to help pay for the cost of their trip. Alternatively, you can simply send us a donation.

What do you get for your investment?

First and foremost, you will receive the satisfaction of knowing you have helped contribute to an activity that will benefit children with special needs. Since our industry has such a deep commitment to the safety and well being of children, what better way to demonstrate that commitment than to do something that will benefit the most special of children?

Second, you will receive public and media recognition. Every Participant receives a commemorative shirt that has the official Plan Pull logo on the front, with the team name and sponsors' logo on the back. The shirts become tremendous collector's items, especially among members of the media. Many wear them on the air when they make their reports.

Third, with the school bus display and the anticipated media coverage, SBIC is planning to create a special media campaign that will focus on the national media and the local media from each sponsor's state to hype the event and highlight the school bus transportation industry's commitment to children. We are even working on a special promotion to put our skirts in the hands and on the backs of some VIP's that will give our sponsors even more exposure.

If you are interested in being a part of this exceptional event and taking advantage of this unique opportunity, please contact us.

Charlie Gauthier
NASDPTS
execdirector@nasdpts.org
540-253-5520

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NAPT
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800-989-NAPT

A Bit of VAPT HISTORY ---

(The following is a memo dated April 5, 1977, from President Nathan Young to Virginia's Pupil Transportation Supervisors and Assistants, Chief Mechanics and School Bus Distributors. It describes the first meeting of newly founded VAPT.)

On October 25, 1976 a meeting was held in Richmond to organize a State Association for Pupil Transportation. Approximately 60 Transportation Supervisors from across the state as well as several distributors of school bus bodies and chassis attended this meeting.

As a result of the interest and enthusiasm shown by those present, it was decided to form an association as recommended by the planning committee.

Mr. Robert Marriott was selected to service as Chairman of the Nominating Committee to recommend a slate of officers and directors to serve during 1977. The following names were placed in nomination and elected by a majority vote of those attending the meeting:

President:	Nathan H. Young, Jr., Director of Pupil Transportation, Henrico Co.
President Elect:	Evangeline Fox, Supervisor of Pupil Transportation, York County
Secretary:	Donald G. Travitz, Supervisor of Pupil Transportation, Chesapeake
Treasurer:	Roy E. Hopkins, Supervisor of Pupil Transportation, Louisa County
Directors:	Abraham Bushrod, Jr., Pupil Transportation Supervisor, King George Jack H. Jones, Supervisor of Pupil Transportation, Richmond City Bradford Scherr, Supervisor of Pupil Transportation, Suffolk Robert Wilson, Supervisor of Pupil Transportation, Washington Co.

(Note: Evangeline Fox resigned from York County Public Schools to enter private business. The Executive Board met in April to fill the vacancy for President Elect.)

To further determine the feelings of those attending the organizational meeting, a questionnaire was distributed and later tabulated. The tabulation of this questionnaire is as follows:

- Organization Name: Virginia Association for Pupil Transportation
- Meetings: Once annually
- Meeting Time: Fall of each year
- Length of Meeting: Two days
- Meeting Location: Alternate location annually
- Membership to include: Transportation Supervisors and Assistant Supervisors from local and state levels, chief mechanics and vendors of school bus chassis and school bus bodies.
- Meetings include ladies programs for wives? Yes
- Organization Leadership: President, President Elect, Secretary, Treasurer and four Directors
- Committees: Nominating, Membership, Constitution and Bylaws, Resolutions, Auditing and Legislative.
- Organization Quarterly Newsletter desired? Yes
- Affiliation with National Organization? Yes
- Annual Dues: \$5.00

The purpose of our organization as described in our Constitution and By-laws, adopted by the Executive Board at its meeting on December 14, 1976 is as follows:

In order to promote the principles and policies of pupil transportation at all levels; to assist pupil transportation personnel, public and private, throughout the Commonwealth in developing improved performance by advancing professional standards; and by constant and continuous emphasis on the nature of pupil transportation as an effective, supportive service in the education of the young people, we hereinafter provide for the unified effort in executing the purposes for which we stand.

The Executive Board will be meeting later this spring to formulate plans for our Fall Annual Meeting. The Board will strive to provide a program that will be interesting and informative. Every effort will be made to provide topic discussion in areas of administrative matters and mechanical problems. Our program will be scheduled to allow time for our State Department of Education leaders to present and discuss items they feel pertinent.

With this mailing, we invite you to join our organization during our charter year membership drive. The strength of our organization will be determined largely by the number of participating.

Since we do not know by name, the identity of all persons in your school division that would have an interest in participating in our organization, we are asking that you distribute the additional membership application copies enclosed.

See you in Charlottesville on April 13, 1977.

News from Chesterfield County - Walk across America

When school started in Chesterfield County the school bus drivers, including Transportation administrators and retired personnel walked as well as drove. Everyone who participated was given a pedometer with the Chesterfield logo, as well as log sheets for recording distances each time they walk. Using treadmills is an acceptable alternative. At the end of each month drivers will turn in their monthly totals, the distances will be tallied for each area office and the Transportation Director's Office will tally the totals for all drivers for that month.

An enlarged United States map has been placed in each area office and the monthly distances will be totaled and plotted on the map. When the drivers meet again in January, it is hopeful that the drivers as a group will have walked to the Pacific Coast and back. In fact, organizers are so optimistic that a map of the world has been enlarged and posted beside the US map in the

Transportation Director's Office. It is believed that Chesterfield County Public School's Transportation employees will walk at least 25,000 miles by the end of January, 2005--- an around-the-world trip.

Their progress will be reported in future editions of the newsletter and the final results will be reported. If Chesterfield County is successful in this endeavor, perhaps we can get some challenges from other county and city school divisions.

Wow, school bus folks pulling planes and walking around the world in the same newsletter. I'm tired just reading about it. Good Luck to all of the participants and Have a Great School Year to All!